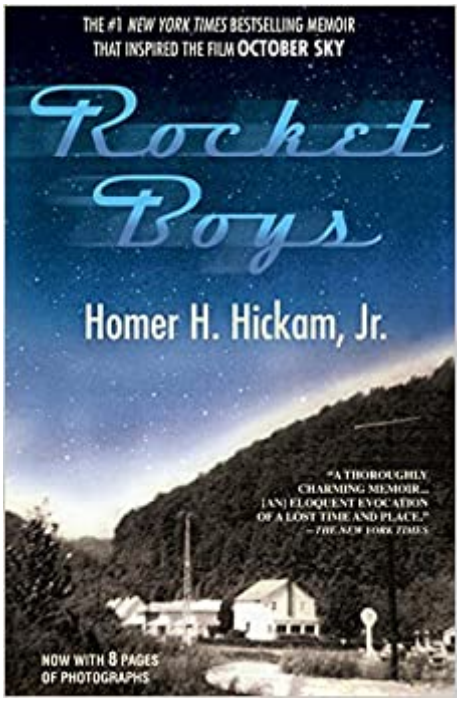
Ebook Directory
the best source of ebook

The book was found

Rocket Boys: A Memoir (The Coalwood Series #1)



PDF
Adobe
DOWNLOAD EBOOK

Synopsis

"Until I began to build and launch rockets, I didn't know my home town was at war with itself over its children, and that my parents were locked in a kind of bloodless combat over how my brother and I would live our lives. I didn't know that if a girl broke your heart, another girl, virtuous at least in spirit, could mend it on the same night. And I didn't know that the enthalpy decrease in a converging passage could be transformed into jet kinetic energy if a divergent passage was added. The other boys discovered their own truths when we built our rockets, but those were mine."So begins Homer "Sonny" Hickam Jr.'s extraordinary memoir of life in Coalwood, West Virginia-a hard-scrabble little company town where the only things that mattered were coal mining and high school football. But in 1957, after the Soviet satellite Sputnik shot across the Appalachian sky, Sonny and his teenaged friends decided to do their bit for the U.S. space race by building their own rocketsÃ¢â ¬â •and Coalwood, Sonny and A powerful story of growing up and of getting out, of a mother's love and a father's fears, Homer Hickam's memoir Rocket Boys proves, like Angela's Ashes and Russell Baker's Growing Up before it, that the right storyteller and the right story can touch readers' hearts and enchant their souls.In a town where the only things that mattered were coal-mining and high-school football, where the future was regarded with more fear than hope, a young man watched the Soviet satellite Sputnik race across the West Virginia skyÃ¢â ¬â •and soon found his future in the stars. In 1957, Homer H. "Sonny" Hickam, Jr., and a handful of his friends were inspired to start designing and launching the home-made rockets that would change their lives and their town forever.Looking back after a distinguished NASA career, Hickam shares the story of his youth, taking readers into the life of the little mining town of Coalwood and the boys who would come to embody its dreams. Step by step, with the help (and occasional hindrance) of a collection of unforgettable characters, the boys learn not only how to turn scrap into sophisticated rockets that fly miles into the sky, but how to sustain their dreams as they dared to imagine a life beyond its borders in a town that the postwar boom was passing by.Rocket Boys has already caught the eye of Hollywood: The producer of Field of Dreams is now working to produce a major motion picture in time for next year's Academy Awards.A uniquely endearing story with universal themes of class, family, coming of age, and the thrill of discovery, Homer Hickam's Rocket Boys is evocative, vivid storytelling at its most magical.

Book Information

Hardcover: 384 pages

Publisher: Delacorte Press; 1st edition (September 15, 1998)

Language: English
ISBN-10: 038533320X
ISBN-13: 978-0385333207
Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1.2 x 8.3 inches
Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)
Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 978 customer reviews
Best Sellers Rank: #176,114 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 inÃ Â Books > Engineering & Transportation > Engineering > Aerospace > Propulsion Technology #96 inÃ Â Books > Engineering & Transportation > Engineering > Aerospace > Astronautics & Space Flight #260 inÃ Â Books > Science & Math > Astronomy & Space Science > Aeronautics & Astronautics

Customer Reviews

Inspired by Werner von Braun and his Cape Canaveral team, 14-year-old Homer Hickam decided in 1957 to build his own rockets. They were his ticket out of Coalwood, West Virginia, a mining town that everyone knew was dying--everyone except Sonny's father, the mine superintendent and a company man so dedicated that his family rarely saw him. Hickam's smart, iconoclastic mother wanted her son to become something more than a miner and, along with a female science teacher, encouraged the efforts of his grandiosely named Big Creek Missile Agency. He grew up to be a NASA engineer and his memoir of the bumpy ride toward a gold medal at the National Science Fair in 1960--an unprecedented honor for a miner's kid--is rich in humor as well as warm sentiment. Hickam vividly evokes a world of close communal ties in which a storekeeper who sold him saltpeter warned, "Listen, rocket boy. This stuff can blow you to kingdom come." Hickam is candid about the deep disagreements and tensions in his parents' marriage, even as he movingly depicts their quiet loyalty to each other. The portrait of his ultimately successful campaign to win his aloof father's respect is equally affecting. --Wendy Smith

Great memoirs must balance the universal and the particular. Too much of the former makes it overly familiar; too much of the latter makes readers ask what the story has to do with them. In his debut, Hickam, a retired NASA engineer, walks that line beautifully. On one level, it's the story of a teenage boy who learns about dedication, responsibility, thermodynamics and girls. On the other hand, it's about a dying way of life in a coal town where the days are determined by the rhythms of the mine and the company that controls everything and everybody. Hickam's father is Coalwood, W.Va.'s mine superintendent, whose devotion to the mine is matched only by his wife's loathing for

it. When Sputnik inspires "Sonny" with an interest in rockets, she sees it not as a hobby but as a way to escape the mines. After an initial, destructive try involving 12 cherry bombs, Sonny and his cronies set up the Big Creek Missile Agency (BCMA). From Auk I (top altitude, six feet), through Auk XXXI (top altitude, 31,000 feet), the boys experiment with nozzles, fins and, most of all, fuel, graduating from a basic black powder to "rocket candy" (melted potassium chlorate and sugar) to "Zincoshine" (zinc, sulfur, moonshine). But Coalwood is the real star, here. Teachers, clergy, machinists, town gossips, union, management, everyone become co-conspirators in the BCMA's explosive three-year project. Hickam admits to taking poetic license in combining characters and with the sequence of events, and if there is any flaw, it's that the people and the narrative seem a little too perfect. But no matter how jaded readers have become by the onslaught of memoirs, none will want to miss the fantastic voyage of BCMA, Auk and Coalwood. First serial to Life. 10-city author tour. (Sept.) FYI: Rocket Boys is currently in production at Universal, which plans to release it later this year.Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Starts of slow and picks up. Nostalgic with a tiny bit of math and science. I personally enjoyed the success story of the boys whom people didn't expect much from. Especially Homer,whom was mocked for struggling with Algebra and went on to be a NASA engineer. The book paints just how crucially important and influential teachers are, as well as receiving support from somewhere so that life doesn't end up crushing young people's dreams. I learned a great deal about West Virginia during that time period, and how the space race impacted life in Homer's little town. Overall I would recommend.

As a reviewer for the San Antonio Express-News, I got the advance copy of this book a few weeks ago. I put it aside in order to finish a few other projects. About a week ago, I picked it up before going to bed after a late evening, intending to read it until I fell asleep. At 7:30 the next morning, I closed the book after finishing it. Oh, I tried to put it down a few times, but I finally gave it up and decided to finish it. I enjoyed it immensely, although I think it could have been a little less pretentious in spots. It almost seemed like "Revenge of the Nerds" in places. However, a very strong story very reminscent of Beverly Cleary's "Henry Huggins" stories. Should make an interesting movie, provided they concentrate on the personal triumphs and not try to turn it into a "90210" episode. A keeper.

Homer Hadley Hickam. Junior. If ever there was a name that suggested either a captain of

industryor a boy steeped in science, this is it. A little of both, I'd say. The story starts in a West Virginia town named Coalwood, and takes the reader into the home of the Hickams. All the elements of a good story are found within. The time period is set early on - a 50's nuclear family in a mining town; dad has modern day problems - he must be available to the mine around the clock. Mom dreams of a life far from Coalwood along a beach in North Carolina as witnessed by her ongoing painting of a seaside landscape. I was touched by the the mother's resolve to get through her day to day in Coalwood, in part because of the view she'd created for herself in her artwork. Brilliant. As described by the author, she's a strong woman determined to raise and prepare her sons to get a good education and a job that doesn't involve the brutal realities of mining. Two adolescent boys vie for their father's attention; one son's the high school football star,Jim, who's assured he has his father's solid interest, while the younger son, a kid swept up by rocket science, rarely captures his father's attention. The end of the story was made more satisfyingbecause, after trying time and again to gain his father's interest,Sonny,finally does so as he's approache- ing his college years and his father's pushing towards the end of his career at the mines. The family dynamic - scrappy and straightforward, had universal themes for the readerto consider and Sonny's spirit had me cheering as he worked hard to improve his rocket-launches, built his boyhood friendships in a team of sorts, and made connections with scientists and educators beyond the world he knew well in Coalwood. I found Sonny a fearless, strong leader of his intrepid "rocket boys" who kept at his dreams even though, as a group and as individuals,they suffered failures along the way, both personal and professional - the science fair was a huge opportunity for them. Hickam played the right notes when describing the high school scene; the students drowsy morning starts along a harrowing route, the tippy toeing around the girl/boy interests, the fights that surfaced between brothers and players, and thestudied, thoughtful way the young boys applied themselves to making rockets that actually flew. It's a riveting story with opening scenes focused on the family, good tension builds as Homer (Sonny) keeps at his project while navigating high school life and in the end, it was gratifying to discover that the old adage, "hard work pays off" served the Big Creek Missile Agency (BCMA) delivering the attention and accolades they deserved. Homer Hadley Hickam, Jr. triumphed in the end and the reader soars right along with those rockets.rocket-building

This is Americana at its best. The reader is propelled into the 1950s, small town America, and the cold war. Readers are immediately find themselves living the life of a teenager in the small town that evolves around the coal mining industry. Here we learn about the students in the high school and workers that risk their lives in the mines. But we also learn that through innovation and a dream, that

this everyday student was able to overcome any predestination set up for him by his surroundings. Here he has a dream to build a rocket and does it with the help of his friends and the town. Easy reader, grades 6 on up.

This is a well written book that holds your interest and in my case was a trip down memory lane. I too like many boys raised in the 1950's and 60's was inspired and challenged by the launching of sputnik and like Homer I built rockets beginning where Homer finished with dimensions and power enough to reach altitudes measured in miles. But unlike Homer I had to do this in only a couple iterations because I lacked what Homer had in terms of support at school, home, or community. I had the ability to imagine as Homer did and I was good at Physics and Chemistry. I taught myself a little materials engineering and got a friend that was taking a high school shop class to do the fabrication work from my drawings. We made several successful launches and sent them down range into Lake Ontario. We had a lot of fun and learned a lot but without my getting needed support, especially educational support, I never made it to NASA. I suspect my story is a lot more common than is Homer's as a lot of things clicked in his favor, especially his mother's support paying for college and encouraging his youthful experiments. In the USA is takes a lot of money to get an education. Self study is good but It takes a lot of money to get a credentialed education and I suspect a lot of Homer's like Homer senior or me did not reach our full potential because had that happened maybe Mr. Hickam would be reading my book on rocket designs. I also was only a few feet away from JFK but did not field a question on rockets or education as I would have asked why support going to the moon and do such a poor job supporting low cost state supported higher education the way it is supported in Europe.Sure was fun ... Michael Law

This was a saw the movie and then read the book situation for me. I have to say the book is a very easy read and interesting slice of life in West Virginia as well as in the early days of the space race.

Download to continue reading...

Rocket Boys: A Memoir (The Coalwood Series #1) Rocket Boys: The Coalwood Series, Book 1 Rocket Boys (The Coalwood Series #1) US Army Technical Manual, ARMY AMMUNITION DATA SHEETS FOR ROCKETS, ROCKET SYSTEMS, ROCKET FUZES, ROCKET MOTORS, (FSC 1340), TM 43-0001-30, 1981 Clothes, Clothes, Clothes. Music, Music, Music. Boys, Boys, Boys.: A Memoir Rocket Girl: The Story of Mary Sherman Morgan, America's First Female Rocket Scientist Firing A Rocket : Stories of the Development of the Rocket Engines for the Saturn Launch Vehicles and the Lunar Module as Viewed from the Trenches (Kindle Single) October Sky (The Coalwood

Series #1) HARDY BOYS STARTER SET, TH The Hardy Boys Starter Set Guys Write for Guys Read: Boys' Favorite Authors Write About Being Boys Lightkeepers Boys Box Set: Ten Boys Saints for Boys: A First Book for Little Catholic Boys God's Amazing Creatures & Me! Devotions for Boys and Girls Ages 6 to 10 (Devotions for Boys and Girls Ages 6-10) Dinosaur Coloring Book ~ Jumbo Dino Coloring Book For Children: Color & Create Dinosaur Activity Book For Boys with Coloring Pages & Drawing Sheets (Coloring Books For Boys) (Volume 1) The Growing Up Book for Boys: What Boys on the Autism Spectrum Need to Know! Boys Adrift: The Five Factors Driving the Growing Epidemic of Unmotivated Boys and Underachieving Young Men The Best of Boys' Life: For All Boys- Celebrating the Centenary of the Founding of the Boy Scouts of America Coloring Books for Teen Boys: Detailed Designs: Black Background: Advanced Drawings for Teenagers & Older Boys; Zendoodle Skulls, Snakes, Lions, Wolves, Owls & Geometric Patterns; Midnight Edition The Boys Vol. 1: The Name of the Game (Garth Ennis' The Boys) Boys Can Cook Too!: An Inspirational Cookbook for Active boys of all Ages

Contact Us

DMCA

Privacy

FAQ & Help